



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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PRESS RELEASE

Friendswood 7th grader wins Texas Travels essay contest

Action-packed account of how Bandera County got its name wins top honor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25, 2012

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AUSTIN — Westbrook Intermediate School's Kelly Sang, 12, is the Seventh Grade Grand Prize winner of the 2012 Texas Travels essay contest, sponsored by the Texas General Land Office's Save Texas History Program.

Kelly's action-packed essay tells the bloody story of how Bandera County got its name, its past as an important staging area for cattle drives and its present as a tourist draw and "Cowboy Capitol of the World."

"Kelly's essay reads like an old dimestore cowboy novel, but the story it tells is the real deal," said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, who selected the winners. "Texas history is exciting and so was this essay."

Kelly begins her essay in 1843, at the Battle of Bandera Pass, a turning point in the Texans efforts to exterminate the Native Americans. The battle was the first time the Comanche had encountered men with repeating revolvers. And while greatly outnumbered, Texas Ranger Capt. John C. Hays and his men held their ground. "An Indian seemed to fall every time a puff of smoke and gunpowder released a shot into the waves of raiding savages, splattering pools of scarlet blood into the sea of fighting men," Kelly writes.

"The spirit of the "Cowboy Capital of the World" will live on in all of Bandera's well known ranches and in all those championship cowboys who had learned to rope and ride in Bandera County!"

Kelly's winning essay - selected from about 2,100 essays - earns her round-trip airline tickets for four to San Antonio from any Southwest Airlines destination in Texas, hotel accommodations for two nights and complimentary dining, as well as tickets to attractions provided by the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau. Jacqueline Graham was Kelly's teacher. Ten finalists per grade win Save Texas History backpacks, a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Commissioner Patterson and a historic map replica from the Land Office Archives Collection. The names of all finalists appear at www.savetexashistory.org.

While all Texas fourth- and seventh-grade students study Texas history, Patterson hopes that asking students to write about the history of places close to their hearts will bring the stories to life. All public, private and home-schooled students of appropriate age for the fourth grade or seventh grade were eligible to participate. Essays for the annual contest are judged on originality of idea, cohesiveness of thought and organization. Proper grammar, spelling and punctuation counted.

The Texas General Land Office Save Texas History™ program is a statewide initiative to rally public support and private funding for the preservation and promotion of more than 35 million historic maps and documents. With the twin goals of preservation and education, the Save Texas History program seeks to conserve these documents for future generations and educate Texans about the rich heritage found in these vital records. For more details, visit www.savetexashistory.org.

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